

Newton Council on Aging Advisory Board Meeting
Tuesday February 25, 2014
7:30 p.m.
Newton Senior Center
345 Walnut Street Newtonville MA 02460

Attendance: N. Brown, H. Gunner, H. Haywood, Jo-E. Hefron, A. Hoffman, , M. Knapp, E. Krasney, E. Picard, J. Picard, C. Rose , E. Rosenberg, N. Scammon, C. A. Shea, T. Shoemaker, D. Sostek,

Staff: J.Colino, Director Department of Senior Services (NDSS)

Notified: A. Cooper, N. Hartstone

Guests: Chryse Gibson, Donna Murphy

1. Welcome/Call to Order

- A. The meeting was called to order by M. Knapp, Chair
- B. Minutes were approved with the following changes:
 - Section 2 paragraph E was NEU (not BU)
 - Section 2A Sessions are available each week at either the NSC or the NFL
 - p. 2 1st paragraph- Pelham House is also congregate housing
- C. Joyce and Ernie Picard complimented the content of the minutes.
- D. Jayne acknowledged parking difficulties because of a conflicting meeting.

2. Chair's Report

- A. Lisa Heyison, the new Volunteer Coordinator has started work with the hours Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with flexibility as needed. Her office is in the basement. COA/AB members are requested to give her suggestions for volunteering and programs. Lisa is updating the volunteer manual, running the tax work-off program, coordinating the volunteer snow shoveling, and coordinating LGBT programs. H. Gunner mentioned Frank Caro's and Brookline Can's (B-Can) efforts on snow shoveling.
- B. The FY15 City budget process has begun. The Department of Senior Services has had no line item for programming. J. Colino requested "program" line item so that, in the future, programs could be funded as a regular part of the budget rather coming out of a revolving account. Programs are currently funded partly by program fees. The other budget requests if approved would move some operational expenses from the revolving account to the city budget. The Mayor presents the budget to the Board of Aldermen the third week of April. Department of Senior Services will present our budget on May 7th to the Programs and Services Sub-committee. COA/AB members are encouraged to come to budget presentations to show support.
- C. The Massachusetts Council on Aging (MCOA) is doing surveys to catalogue data about the budget, programs, staffing, and more for better sharing and benchmarking among communities. It was noted that Newton's school budget is 65% of the total city budget, whereas the NDSS budget is less than 1/2 of 1% of the total budget. The COA/AB would benefit from understanding what Senior Services budgets are in other nearby, similar communities.

3. Working Groups

A. **Mobility and Transportation:**

- i. The Newton Highlands MBTA station is getting closer to becoming handicap accessible.
- ii. A jitney bus is being discussed to help seniors and others get around town.
- iii. The first Newton Charlie Card survey was completed on February 7th. 76 cards were issued and 32 people were interviewed. Survey results were handed out and discussed.
 - Interviewees were very willing to talk to surveyors.

- We could consider a self-administered survey but interviewing provided opportunities for people to talk and also for surveyors to talk about the NDSS.
- We should consider asking people about their specific destinations in Newton, which could inform transportation planning.
- C. Gibson reported research showing that people are willing to walk .6 mile to a transit stop or other places.
- M. Knapp acknowledged Julie Norstrand's help with the survey.
- M. Knapp will email a copy of the survey to anyone interested on the Advisory Board.
- Question: Can parking sticker fees subsidize transportation. Answer: No.

B. Housing: The key concepts for a draft housing position statement were reviewed.

- We support the availability of housing for senior residents who
 - have low and moderate incomes,
 - are eligible for affordable housing or have disabilities,
 - are beyond eligibility for affordable housing but who may not have the resources to buy or rent market-rate housing.
- Are concerned that there are few options for purchasing or renting single level units near transportation and services.
- We support enhancement of neighborhood areas outside the dwelling place.
- We support Newton seniors by helping them to stay connected to their neighborhood, city and other venues.
- We work with all appropriate Newton City Departments and Agencies to examine zoning and other issues that impact housing.
- We continue to gather data to understand housing needs.

Comments:

- M. Knapp will send an e-mail to those interested in re-convening the Housing Sub-Group.
- H. Haywood suggested we read the "Metrowest Futures" to understand the housing situation. It's the people in the community saying no and blocking housing development. Holly agreed and said people who will be impacted pay attention and organize to oppose. Carol Ann mentioned that the Engine 6 group continues around the issues of affordable housing and might expand their vision.
- M. Knapp attended a meeting on the Austin St. development where there was a lot of opposition.
- C. Gibson mentioned that the range between affordable and market is broadening with income disparity.
- H. Haywood said that people don't understand the development process and developers in Newton get discouraged.
- J. Picard said that the person developing the Court Street Project wished to speak to the COA/Ab.

C. Community Engagement:

- T. Shoemaker said the veteran's have a formal meeting the first Tuesday of every month from 6:00-8:00 p.m. They would be interested in hearing news from the senior center. Marian and Diane will be going out to the vets and other groups. Let them know if you're interested in joining.
- D. Sostek announced NNHS Spring Fling, Intergenerational Program, Saturday, March 29, from 12:00 – 3:00.
- H. Gunner and J. Colino are working on a committee that is organizing a gay pride event on June 6th, 5:00 p.m. The event is co-sponsored by the Mayor's office and the Human Rights Commission.

- F. Nancy Scammon and Molly Sass will run the 1st Senior Prom, a collaboration between Parks and Recreation and the Senior Center. It will be at Post 440 on May 15th.
- "Dancing with the Stars" will also be held at Post 440 on Thursday night, May 15.

D. Other

- M. Knapp and J. Colino attended the Tufts Health Care Foundation, Healthy Aging Conference. It focused on community profiles based on health indicators. The profiles provide data which can be used to understand how Newton compares to other communities in the state. To access the data profiles, <http://mahealthyagingcollaborative.org/> hit the profile button. Beth Dugan, Professor, UMass, Gerontology Institute is the project manager. She is a Newton Resident.
- M. Knapp mentioned that her next article for the Newton Tab will be about how to make senior voices heard.

Meeting adjourned at 9:35.

Next meeting

Tuesday, March 25 at the Newton Senior Center at 7:30 p.m.

Rob Garrity, City of Newton's Director of Sustainability will be our speaker.

Submitted by Carol Rose, Secretary